Castlemaine Naturalist

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Monthly newsletter of the Castlemaine Field Naturalists Club Inc.

CFNC at the Loddon Falls Photo – Noel Young

Where Water Falls in Victoria

While doing some research for an idea to photograph 100 waterfalls in Victoria for a book about nine years ago, Ian Wacey and Ray Barber realised that there was very little official information, and saw the need for them to be properly named and catalogued. Thus began a mammoth task which they estimate is half complete, to investigate an estimated 700 to 1000 falls in the State.

To their credit, the relevant government departments have responded to the project, and are now establishing corrected names for falls on the place names register, and with the aid of new GPS readings, marking their positions on the new map series for the state.

At the October meeting, Ian and Ray entertained us with tales of their exploits and incidents while exploring the falls. In many cases, access was quite difficult, even hazardous, to get the excellent photos needed for the primary aim of producing an illustrated book. We were shown many examples, accompanied by interesting accounts of the history behind the names. In some cases names have had to be derived. Photography had special problems; many of our streams are of course, intermittent, and for the purpose, photos needed to be taken during periods of good water flow. With some falls difficult of access, a tripod had to be hauled into place, as a slow exposure is the only way to get that "veil" effect, and in any case, may be necessary due to poor light.

The result of their efforts so far is a beautifully presented book '250 Victorian Waterfalls'. As the work progresses we can expect additions, either a revision or additional volumes.

Where is Evansford Falls?

Chris Timewell

On Friday evening (11 Oct 2013), the Castlemaine Field Naturalists were entertained by Ian Wacey and Ray Barber, who spoke about their efforts to document every waterfall in Victoria. As we learnt, this is no small undertaking, as they estimate that there may be somewhere between 700 and 1000 of them. Some are well known. Most are not, with a surprising number not even having an official name.

As part of their research, they have come across an old photograph of the Evansford Falls near the Maryborough Reservoir. They have not been able to find these falls. Ian writes "*I have attached a photo of "Evansford Falls" taken circa 1907 at Maryborough Reservoir. I presume this is now called Evansford Reservoir. My question is do these falls still exist? I do remember reading somewhere that this Reservoir was planned to be enlarged sometime in the 1920s so whether that occurred or not and if I did whether these falls became submerged is some information that would be of interest to me.*" Go to our website for a link to see a copy of the postcard with the waterfalls.

Can anyone help? If so, either comment on the CFNC blog, or email the club directly (castlemainefnc@hotmail.com), and we'll pass on the details to Ian and Ray.

Loddon Falls Excursion

Noel Young

On Saturday October 12th the club outing was appropriately, to one of the well known waterfalls of our area. The weather was pleasant for a change, and we motored down to Glenlyon via the Green Gully road, with a couple of stops to look at the wildflowers.

The prolonged period of volcanism in western Victoria produced repeated basaltic lava flows in geologically recent times. In the local area there are several examples of partially eroded basalt flows capping the much older Ordovician base rock. The tongues of lava naturally follow old river courses, and have buried former river gravels or alluvium which may bear gold derived from the Ordovician. This fact has led to many examples of so called "deep lead" mining, where shafts have been sunk through the hard basalt to reach the underlying gravels. Headward erosion of streams back into the basalt tongues commonly results in good vertical waterfalls because of the hardness of the basalt together with its vertical cooling cracks (characteristically in a hexagonal pattern). The columns of basalt

tend to fall away leaving a vertical face. Such is the case at the Loddon falls, where a deep gorge is left below the falls, having vertical walls of columnar basalt from a rather thick single flow event.

Photo Gallery - Joy Weatherill

1. A pair of Royal Spoonbills with heads tucked away present a different look at Ocean Grove
   [perhaps they are preparing for the Melbourne Cup - ed..]

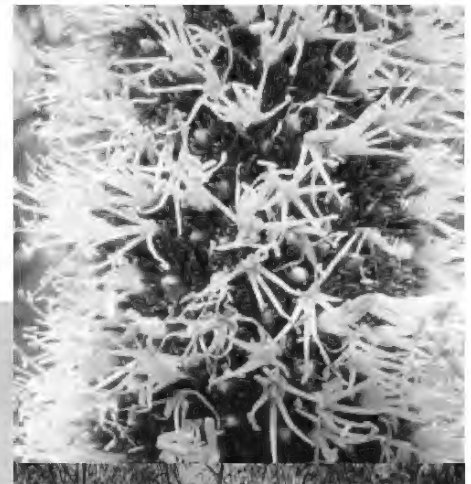
2. A tree full of Corella at Bacchus Marsh in August

3. Below; I counted over 240 Freckled Duck in McCloud's Waterhole, Drysdale on August 6

Left - Eye to eye with a Brolga at Serendip

Below - Hoary-headed Grebe at Hospital Swamp

Below left - Moorhen at Blue Waters Lake, Ocean Grove



Xanthorhoea australis at Ocean Grove Nature Reserve

Wednesday Wildflower Wander 9th October - Kalimna ridge

Noel Young

The circuit track off the ridge road in the Kalimna Park is always reliable for a variety of wildflowers in spring, and this year, although the bush seemed dry and the flowers more scattered than other years, there was a variety of plants in flower.

Glossodia major	Purple Waxlip Orchid
Caladenia fuscata	Pink/Dusky Fingers
Calochilus robertsonii	Purple Beard-orchid
Caladenia gracilis	Musky Hood Orchid
Thelymitra rubra	Salmon Sun-orchid
Diuris pardina	Leopard Orchid
Arthropodium strictum	Chocolate Lily
Dianella admixta	Black-anther Flax-lily
Thysanotus patersonii	Twining Fringe-lily*
Craspedia variabilis	Billy Button
Prostanthera denticulata	Rough Mint-bush
Wahlenbergia stricta	Blue bell
Ozothamnus obcordatus	Grey Everlasting
Xerochrysum viscosum	Sticky Everlasting
Grevillea alpina	Downy Grevillea
Philotheca verrucosa	Fairy Wax flower
Daviesia ulicifolia	Gorse Bitter-pea
Daviesia leptophylla	Narrow-leaf Bitter-pea
Dillwynia cinerascens	Grey Parrot-pea (?)
Pimelea linifolia	Slender? Rice-flower
Burchardia umbellata	Milkmaid - (photo 1)
Microseris sp.	Yam Daisy
Brachyloma daphnoides	Daphne Heath
Drosera peltata	Tall Sundew
Tetratheca ciliata	Pink Bells
Calytrix tetragona	Fringe Myrtle - (photo 2)

*(did not find them on the day but several found flowering the day before)

Do Brush-tailed Phascogales kill rabbits?

Nigel Harland

I have seen Tuans around the house over the past couple of years, they creep around our verandah. A few nights ago we were woken up by a sound of thumping on the verandah. Wide awake, we looked out of the window and saw a tuan hurrying away from the doormat outside of the laundry. It was soon out of sight, but we saw something was on the doormat. Investigation showed it was a dead rabbit with no head and entrails separate from the carcass. My first thought was that a Tuan couldn't do that and I presumed it was a fox who brought it there and the Tuan was a later visitor.

Back to sleep, but in the morning as I was removing the rabbit, I wondered why the alleged fox left everything apart from the head. However, investigations suggested that Tuans eat much smaller creatures, with an idea that they might take the odd chicken - no mention of rabbits.

I told this story to our esteemed president a few days later and after becoming very excited, said that she had experienced the very same thing. So I am wondering if any other members have had similar observations. If so, we might be able to add something to the literature.

Next meeting - Ross Williams: "bones of contention"

In August 2003, on the Indonesian island of Flores, scientists found the bones of a little female adult who died 18,000 years ago. She had been a bit over one metre tall with a brain barely one third the average size of ours. Nor was she alone. Remains of others of the same type were found later.

The scientists had discovered a previously unknown species, *Homo floresiensis.* Astoundingly, these tiny beings made stone tools, used fire to cook meat and vegetables, hunted and killed large animals, worked co-operatively in groups and probably spoke a language. That is, they developed a society with its own enduring culture. And they survived on Flores until about 12,000 years ago! The world's media pounced on the news, and told us that "real, live hobbits" used to live in Indonesia. In scientific circles, meanwhile, the discovery ignited a dispute which, a decade later, is still hot. Sadly, the real *Homo floresiensis* got lost along the way.

At the November meeting of the Castlemaine Field Naturalists Club, guest speaker Ross Williams, will talk about what the hard evidence shows about the species' appearance, its abilities, its ecology and how it fits into our own evolutionary history.

Observations

- **Reports at the October meeting -**
- Natalie de Maccus reported finding a Purplish Beard-orchid, Sun-orchids, Leopard Orchids, Caladenia in 4 locations (Musky? - have a musky scent but not strong), more sightings of a Swamp Wallaby, and a Brown snake over a metre long on her property
- Geraldine passed around a Sugar Glider tail - all that was left after something made a meal of it.
- A box of live Cup Moth caterpillars was also passed around. They have again plagued the bush, eating all the Eucalypt leaves over large areas. Mention was made of a virus now attacking the caterpillars, turning them into a gelatinous black blob.
- While looking for wildflowers in late October where Sinclairs lane crosses the railway line in Muckleford, I noticed a busy pair of Sittellas feeding nestlings high in a eucalypt. The cryptic nest blends beautifully with the branch - Noel Young

Disclaimer: The opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the contributors and not necessarily those of the club

Castlemaine Field Naturalists
Coming events

Fri November 8 meeting: Ross Williams - bones of contention

Sat November 9 field trip: Newstead cemetery and Rise 'n Shine

Sat November 30: Annual bird count Organiser Kit Morris

Fri December 13 meeting: Members night
Members' "show and tell"; Share a few photos, a nature experience, a poem - be as creative as you like. And bring a plate for sharing supper.

VISITORS ARE WELCOME AT CLUB ACTIVITIES

General meetings - (second Friday of each month, except January) are held in the Uniting Church (UCA) Hall (enter from Lyttleton St.) at 7.30 pm.
Field Trips - (Saturday following the general meeting) leave from the car park opposite Castle Motel, Duke Street at 1.30pm sharp unless stated otherwise. BYO morning and/or afternoon tea. Outdoor excursions are likely to be cancelled in extreme weather conditions. There are NO excursions on total fire ban days.
Business meetings - fourth Thursday of each month, except December, at George Broadways; 24a Greenhill Ave., at 7.30 pm. Members are invited to attend.

Subscriptions for 2013
Ordinary membership: Single $30, Family $40
Pensioner or student: Single $25, Family $30
Subscription includes postage of the monthly newsletter, Castlemaine Naturalist

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